

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 /059 W
-----015477 091759Z /46

O R 091651Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6640

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USNATO

DIA WASH DC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BEL

COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5931

USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT CRISIS: SUSPENSE CONTINUES

REF: (A) LISBON 5845; (B) LISBON 5882

SUMMARY: MANEUVERING CONTINUED AUGUST 8 IN
PREPARATION FOR THE DESIGNATION OF A PRIME MINISTER.
THE SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE ONCE AGAIN EX-
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PRESSED PS CONCERN OVER THE PROSPECT OF A MILITARY PRIME
MINISTER AND URGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT NOW BEING FORMED
BE REGARDED AS A TRANSITION TO A PARLIAMENTARY BASED
GOVERNMENT. THE LATEST OFFICIAL LEAK FROM THE PRESIDENCY
HAS LT COL LOUREIRO DOS SANTOS AS THE PRIME MINISTERIAL
CHOICE BUT EANES WILL BE CONSULTING FURTHER WITH THE
POLITICAL PARTIES AUGUST 9 AND THAT COULD CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

END SUMMARY.

1. THE SOCIALISTS BACK TRANSITION GOVERNMENT: THE SOCIALIST PARTY, IN A JOINT MEETING OF ITS NATIONAL AND DIRECTIVE COMMITTEES AUGUST 8, DECIDED:
--NOT TO BLOCK CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES, BUT TO BASE PARTY REACTIONS TO A NEW GOVERNMENT ON THE PRIME MINISTER CHOSEN, THE CABINET, AND THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM;
--TO URGE THE PRESIDENT CHOOSE A PRIME MINISTER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE;
--TO NOTE THAT A MILITARY PRIME MINISTER WOULD GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT PORTUGAL'S DEMOCRACY IS MOVING BACKWARDS AND COULD JEOPARDIZE PORTUGAL'S INTEGRATION INTO DEMOCRATIC EUROPE;
--TO NOTE THAT THE GOVERNMENT BEING CONSTITUTED WITHOUT A FIRM PARLIAMENTARY BASE OF SUPPORT IS A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT WHOSE LIFE SHOULD CEASE IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO FIND A PARLIAMENTARY BASED SOLUTION ON WHICH TO ESTABLISH A NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS INSIST ON IMPARTIALITY: THE PSD POLITICAL COMMITTEE DECIDED AT AN AUGUST 8 MEETING THAT THE CIVILIAN OR MILITARY STATUS OF THE FUTURE PRIME MINISTER WAS LESS IMPORTANT THAN HIS IMPARTIALITY AND COMPETENCE. PSD POLITICAL COMMITTEE PRESIDENT MENERES PIMENTEL OBJECTED TO STATEMENTS OF OTHER PARTY LEADERS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT

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MENT SHOULD CARRY OUT THE POLICIES OF THE OUTGOING SOARES GOVERNMENT. PIMENTEL SAID THE PSD, IN PRINCIPLE, WOULD NOT ACCEPT A SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN PSD OPPOSITION TO SUCH A GOVERNMENT.

3. THE NEW PRIME MINISTER: ARMA HEARD FROM SOURCE IN THE PRESIDENCY THAT FORMER ARMED FORCES VICE CHIEF OF STAFF LT COL LOUREIRO DOS SANTOS HAS BEEN SELECTED AS PRIME MINISTER. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT DOS SANTOS, WHO HAS OPPONENTS IN SOME CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES MIGHT BE A STALKING HORSE. THE PSD OBJECTS TO DOS SANTOS AND CLAIMS THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT FLOATED HIS NAME WITH THEM. A PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 8 THAT THE PARTIES WOULD BE CONSULTED FURTHER AUG 9 ON PRIME MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES AND THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT HAD YET MADE A FINAL DECISION. PS SECRETARIAT MEMBER RUI MATEUS TOLD EMBOFF AUG 9 THAT THE SOCIALISTS DO NOT KNOW WHO WILL BE NAMED PRIME MINISTER, BUT DOUBT IT WILL BE A MILITARY MAN. THE SOCIALISTS IN THEIR AUG 7 MEETING WITH EANES WERE ASKED THEIR VIEWS ON THE ADVISABILITY OF A MILITARY PRIME MINISTER, WHICH THEY OPPOSED, THEN FOR A NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT, CIVILIAN CANDIDATES.

4. COMMENT: THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS EASED ITS STAND
SOMEWHAT TOWARD A GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL MEDIATION.
THE SOCIALISTS HAVE MOVED FAR ENOUGH IN THEIR ATTITUDE
TOWARD A PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT THAT THEY CANNOT BE
ACCUSED OF OBSTRUCTIONISM, BUT THEY ARE STILL RELUCTANT
TO DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THE PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT
PERMANENT. MATEUS SAID AUG 9 THAT THE SOCIALISTS WOULD
NOT BLOCK IMPORTANT SOCIALISTS FROM PARTICIPATING IN A
PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT, BUT HE DOUBTED THAT KEY SOCIALISTS
LIKE VITOR CONSTANCIO WOULD WANT TO SERVE IN SUCH A
GOVERNMENT. SOCIALISTS ARE SEEKING TO STEER THE PRESIDENTIAL
GOVERNMENT TOWARD STRICTLY TRANSITION FUNCTIONS PRIOR TO
EITHER ELECTIONS OR A NEW PARLIAMENTARY AGREEMENT.
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BLOOMFIELD

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, NOMINATION, PRIME MINISTER
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LISBON05931
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780326-0206
Format: TEL
From: LISBON USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780883/aaaacrll.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e2e66d66-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LISBON 5845, 78 LISBON 5882
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1793823
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOVERNMENT CRISIS: SUSPENSE CONTINUES
TAGS: PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e2e66d66-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014